

ERNEST HOLLINGS

Another remarkable Senator who is retiring this year is FRITZ HOLLINGS.

I used to joke with FRITZ HOLLINGS that he is the real reason CSPAN first started its closed-caption broadcasts. FRITZ's deep Charleston accent, like the man himself, is an American classic.

When you look inside FRITZ HOLLINGS' desk on the Senate floor, you see the names of giants: John Calhoun, Huey Long, Russell Long, Wayne Morse—courageous men who never hesitated to speak their minds. FRITZ has earned the right to stand with those legends.

He was 36 years old when he was elected Governor of South Carolina. As Governor, he wrote the book on governing in the New South. He raised teacher salaries, invested in education and training, and laid the foundation for South Carolina's economic transformation from an agrarian State to a high-tech, high-wage State.

One of the amazing things about FRITZ HOLLINGS is how often he has been able to see the future before others—not just on matters of race, but on issue after issue.

He was the first Deep South Governor to acknowledge the existence of widespread hunger in his State. He was also the first southern Governor to understand that you can't create a modern economy simply by cutting taxes, you have to invest in education and training.

He has been a relentless advocate of balanced budgets and fiscal discipline since long before they became political buzzwords. In 1984—years before Ross Perot uttered the words FRITZ HOLLINGS made deficit reduction a central plank in his Presidential bid.

He has been fighting for fair trade, and against the export of American jobs, his entire career. He has been calling for a long-term, comprehensive energy plan since before the first OPEC oil crisis in 1973. He wrote America's first fuel-efficiency standards—in 1975.

He was in the forefront of the movement to protect America's oceans in the early 1970s. He saw the future of telecommunications before a lot of Americans knew what "surfing the Internet" meant. He was pushing for increased port and air security before September 11.

If some people have occasionally found FRITZ a little difficult to understand, I suspect it was not so much because of his wonderful Charleston accent but because he was so often ahead of his time.

Now FRITZ and Peatsy are moving home to live full time in their beloved South Carolina, but they will always have a special place in the Senate family. We wish them the very best.

I have to be honest, Mr. President, it was not my wish to depart with these fine Senators. But it has been my honor and a joy to serve with them, and one that I will remember all the days of my life.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Ohio.

HONORING OUR ARMED FORCES

STAFF SERGEANT CHARLES "CHUCK" KISER

Mr. DEWINE. Mr. President, over a week ago we celebrated Veterans Day. In countless parades, ceremonies, and prayer services, Americans honored and remembered the service and sacrifices of all of those who have answered the call of duty. In the days that have followed, I continue to be reminded of something President Ronald Reagan said more than 20 years ago, something he said about the brave service men and women who did not return from the field of battle. This is what he said:

Their lives remind us that freedom is not bought cheaply. It has a cost; it imposes a burden. And just as they whom we commemorate were willing to sacrifice, so, too must we—in a less final, less heroic way—be willing to give of ourselves.

That is an important lesson, our willingness to repay the debts we who are left behind owe our fallen soldiers, this notion of giving of ourselves. It is a lesson the students of McNicholas High School in Cincinnati have taken to heart.

On June 24, 2004, 37-year-old Army SSgt Charles "Chuck" Kiser, an Ohio native and former McNicholas High graduate, lost his life in Iraq while saving the lives of his comrades.

The current students at McNicholas wanted to honor and remember Chuck Kiser this year on Veterans Day, so they went about raising enough money to hold a ceremony and fly Chuck's wife Deb and their two children, Alicia and Mark, from Wisconsin to Ohio, for the services. In their own way, these students gave of themselves. They reached out to the Kiser family and said we will not forget your husband. We will not forget your father. We will not forget him either.

Chuck Kiser was a loving husband, doting father, and courageous soldier. He grew up in Amelia, OH, in a home with his father Charles and six women—mother Glenda and sisters Chris, Denise, Patty, Teresa, and Joy. Some say that living with all those women is what toughened him up and made him into such an outstanding soldier. I imagine that is very true.

Their father passed away in 2002. Chuck and his dad were very close. Chuck followed in his dad's footsteps when he entered the military. The elder Charles had served in the Navy and was a Korean War veteran. Chuck's brother-in-law, Bill Grannen, said that "[Chuck's] father instilled that kind of love of country and commitment in him. I'm sure they're together now."

Chuck was a runner—and a good one, at that. He began his track career in the third grade at St. Bernadette School and continued running through college. At McNicholas High School and at the University of Cincinnati, he was a champion sprinter. As a high

school senior, he finished in second place in the 200-meter run at the state Class AA meet. In fact, he also holds the University of Cincinnati records for the 300 meter and the 300 yard dash indoors. His former coach, Brett Schnier remembered Chuck as his top recruit and that "he could run about anything."

After a year at the University, Chuck decided to join the Navy, where he would eventually meet and marry the love of his life, Deb. Chuck spent seven years in active duty in the Navy, stationed mostly in Italy. It was there that he met Deb, and they fell in love. They started a family while Chuck continued his military service.

Following his time in the Navy, he spent seven years in the Naval Reserves. Later, he entered the Army Reserve because the base was near their eventual home in Cleveland, WI.

Not only was Chuck Kiser a model soldier, he was a model father. He loved his children dearly. He was a great dad. He took joy in coaching Mark and Alicia in various sports. Last year, Chuck coached a Little League championship team and would often volunteer to work with youth at the Zion United Church of Christ in Sheboygan.

Chuck Kiser loved all kids and felt especially strong about helping the children in Iraq. According to his brother-in-law:

Charles really felt like he wanted to secure their freedoms so they could live without the fear they lived under during the dictatorship. He said that if the situation were reversed, he would hope people would come to liberate his children. He believed that in his heart.

That is why Chuck never hesitated when he and the rest of his Army Reserve unit—the 330th Military Police Detachment—were deployed to Iraq earlier this year. He wanted to defend our Nation, and he wanted the Iraqi people to have the same freedoms he and his family enjoyed. Chuck was proud to be serving his country. He was proud to help the Iraqi people in whatever way he could.

Staff Sergeant Kiser lost his life helping the Iraqi people and saving the lives of his Comrades. He was on guard duty in Mosul, Iraq when insurgents began firing from a truck loaded with explosives. Chuck returned fire, but was killed when the truck crashed and exploded. Army Major Mark Magalski noted that Chuck saved countless lives in his final act of bravery.

Upon Chuck's death, hundreds in his hometown of Amelia gathered to show their support for the Kiser family. At the Clermont County courthouse, signs hung that read, "God Bless Chuck and the Kiser Family." Flags were placed in yards and the community came out to help the Kisers in any way they could.

I had the privilege of meeting Chuck's family at the memorial service held in his honor, and I want to thank them for sharing their memories with me. The service was fitting for a man

so full of life. The family requested that the service be a celebration of Chuck's life rather than a time of mourning. As patriotic music played, thousands paid tribute to this American hero. The service was a testament to the love his community had for this brave man—and a testament to the number of lives he touched.

Staff Sergeant Charles Kiser was a good, decent, loving man, who protected our Nation bravely. We will remember him always. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. TALENT). Without objection, it is so ordered.

ASSESSING THE LAST TWO YEARS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Mr. President, as we near the completion of the 108th Congress, it is an appropriate time to look back over the last 2 years and assess where we are. I think by any standard these have been 2 years marked by great achievement.

We have kept Americans safe at home, strengthened our economy, and vigorously pursued the war on terror. I would like to take a look back, as I indicated, at the legislative accomplishments of the 108th Congress.

Last year the Senate passed 11 appropriations bills left over from the previous Congress, and then pushed through all the normal 13 appropriation bills as well as the emergency wartime and Iraq reconstruction supplemental appropriations bill. We responded with the necessary funds to suppress the California fires through a supplemental appropriations. In all, the Senate passed 27 appropriations bills into law last year in the first session alone.

The Senate also pushed through the economic growth package, cutting taxes on American families by \$350 billion, as well as a revolutionary new Medicare prescription drug bill for all of our seniors. The Senate banned the horrific practice of partial-birth abortion. We passed the Do Not Call registry at the Federal Trade Commission. We provided tax relief to military families. We passed the Healthy Forests Act, to stop the catastrophic wildfires that have raged across our country. We enacted free trade agreements with Chile and with Singapore, and passed the African Growth and Opportunity Act.

The Senate passed the Federal Aviation Administration reauthorization to revitalize an air transport industry suffering from the effects of the terrorist attack of 9/11.

After witnessing more than a decade of repression, the Senate passed the Burmese Freedom and Democracy Act.

We secured significant resources to improve our nation's election systems, making it easier to vote and harder to cheat.

We passed the President's faith-based initiative, funded the effort to eradicate the scourge of global AIDs, and acted to guard our children against abduction and exploitation by passing the PROTECT Act.

We expanded NATO to include most of the former Warsaw Pact Countries and passed a significant arms reduction treaty with our enemy-turned-ally, Russia.

We took steps to bridge the digital divide by providing needed funds to historically black colleges, awarded a Congressional Gold Medal to UK Prime Minister Tony Blair, and affirmed the constitutionality of using the term "under God" in the Pledge of Allegiance.

And that was last year. This year, in the second session of this Congress, we passed into law a pension relief and stabilization plan for private sector businesses, workers, and their retirees.

We passed into law a bioshield act to improve countermeasures, like vaccines, to protect our people from biological, chemical or other terrorist attacks.

We passed into law the Unborn Victims of Violence Act.

We passed into law a Defense appropriations bill, the Defense Authorization bill, a Homeland Security appropriations bill, and a Military Construction appropriations bill.

We passed a supplemental funding bill for operations in Iraq.

And we are about to complete work on the nine remaining appropriations bills which successfully concludes action on all Fiscal Year 2005 spending bills.

We have expanded trade opportunities with new free trade agreements with Australia and Morocco.

We have also passed expanded assistance to families with the Working Family Tax Relief Act.

We passed the Internet tax bill to prevent the imposition of capricious taxes on internet transactions.

We expanded the educational opportunities for disabled children by passing an improved IDEA reauthorization.

Also, we responded to the findings of the 9/11 Commission by implementing reforms in the Senate and are still considering as we finish this session intelligence reorganization measures which are in conference now and being discussed on both sides of the aisle.

Last, we passed legislation to revise our tax laws to comply with international trade agreements and, thus, will remove the European tax on U.S. manufacturers. Of particular interest to the Senator from the Commonwealth of Kentucky, that measure included a buyout to aid our long-suffering tobacco growers, many of which reside in my State.

These are the legislative accomplishments of a very productive Congress, of

which we can be justifiably proud. I want to salute the effort of my colleagues who made it so, especially the members of my deputy whip team: LAMAR ALEXANDER, WAYNE ALLARD, CONRAD BURNS, BEN CAMPBELL, JOHN CORNYN, MIKE CRAPO, MIKE ENZI, LISA MURKOWSKI, GORDON SMITH, JOHN SUNUNU, JIM TALENT, and CRAIG THOMAS.

I can't thank them enough for all their hard work, their sound counsel and their tireless effort to help win so many close votes. I particularly want to thank my chief deputy whip, BOB BENNETT, my trusted adviser and dear friend for many years here in the Senate.

But one man deserves particular recognition. During these tough times of economic challenges and armed conflict, America has had to decisively confront some monumental questions.

Yet here, in the Senate, the majority had just a one vote margin—one vote.

But America steered a steady course during the 108th Congress only because this Senate was able to deliver a "yes" when "yes" was needed—yes to economic recovery, yes to funding the war on terrorism, yes to a Medicare prescription drug benefit,—a resounding "yes" to getting the business of America accomplished.

And here in the Senate, with the smallest of margins, on the toughest possible terrain, on the most pressing questions of our time, it was the tireless BILL FRIST who delivered that "yes" time and time again.

A truly remarkable performance by Senator FRIST. He has earned certainly my greatest respect and I think the respect of virtually everyone in this body. We are also proud to call him our good friend.

I also wish our good friend across the aisle, HARRY REID, great success as the new Democratic leader. He is a very able man, a very skillful legislator, and a worthy opponent. I and my colleagues look forward to working with him in the next Congress.

Finally, we cannot conclude the 108th Congress without a sense of sadness. There are many—in fact there are too many—great Senators who are leaving this institution. I have already had an opportunity to express my goodbyes to Senator NICKLES, Senator CAMPBELL, and Senator FITZGERALD.

I also wish a happy and healthy future to our colleagues across the aisle, Senator DASCHLE, Senator BREAU, Senator HOLLINGS, Senator BOB GRAHAM, Senator JOHN EDWARDS, and Senator ZELL MILLER. Each of these men has made a lasting contribution to this marvelous institution.

In closing, I also remember the greatest public servant of my lifetime, President Ronald Reagan, who, after 93 luminous years, departed the Nation he never lost faith in and that loved him so well.

I yield the floor. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.